Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
June 16, 2026
Library Headquarters, Manalapan

Present: Chairperson Brian Boms and Vice Chairperson Barbara McMorrow, Library Commissioners Barbara Lovell, Marcy McMullen, and Mary Ann Musich; also, present, Director Robin Wood, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici

Absent: County Commissioner Erik Anderson, Commissioner Samantha Parker

Guests: County Counsel Hillary Spadaccini, Aide to Commissioner Anderson Isaac Shiram

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

Chairperson Brian Boms opened the meeting of Tuesday, June 16, 2026 with the following statement:

> "The Library Commission has complied with the regular requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act by giving written notice to the Press and County Clerk's Office and by posting on the Library web page the date, time, and place of the meeting."

Any guests in attendance must add their name to the sign-in sheet. Anyone wishing to speak at today's meeting will be given 3 minutes per person during the Public Comments section of the agenda.

Agenda Approval
A Motion to approve the June 16, 2026 Agenda was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

Minutes
Chairperson Brian Boms gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from May 17, 2026. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the Open Public Meeting minutes of May 17, 2026 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

Library Commission Remarks
Chairperson Brian Boms remarked that he and several other members of the Library Commission and Administration attended the recent County Commissioner meeting where Commissioner Frank Wells was recognized. He shared that Mr. Wells wished to extend his thanks and appreciation to the members of the Library Commission for serving alongside him for so many years.

The Brielle Library recently hosted a Meet and Greet along with the Monmouth County Mobile Connection. He attended along with Director Wood and Assistant Director Amici to meet with the library's new Board of Trustees. In addition, representatives from several Monmouth County agencies were in attendance to highlight services offered.

Former Library Commissioner Don Burden and Muriel Smith inquired to Chairperson Boms about possibly dedicating space in one of the library branches in memory of Lilian Burry. Chairperson Boms asked the Commission to consider where something like this might be most appropriate. The Colts Neck Library was suggested, as it was the town were Ms. Burry resided. Director Wood explained that it might be more complicated as the Colts Neck Library is owned by the town of Colts Neck and not Monmouth County, but that she will look into it.

Financial Report

May Financials - Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets

Director Wood submitted the May 2026 Financial Report to the Commission, including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets wherein the 2026 Detail Budget Account charged year to date is $3,029,447.65 posted to the Approved Budget of $18,395,856.32; this total includes encumbered amounts.

A Motion to approve the May 2026 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Department Presentation – Heidi Amici

Assistant Director Amici presented a year in review for 2025 to the Commission. She stated that each year the library is required to submit a report to the New Jersey State Library to receive Per Capita State Aid in the amount of around $91,000. She added that the statistics that contribute to this report provide a great snapshot of where the library stands from year to year.

Last year, the State of New Jersey updated website accessibility requirements for towns that have over 50,000 in their service area. As a result, the library website now features a button where users can customize their browsing experience to best suit their needs.

Several new databases were added in 2025. Among these are Candid, which tracks U.S. nonprofits, grants, and guides users to find funding and research charities; World Book Early Learning, a fun, educational, and interactive tool for young users; and Explora, a research database designed for schools and public libraries.

Initiated by Director Wood, the library began utilizing Zoho, a shared work drive that allows for collaboration and seamless information sharing across the library system. Overall, it has been a great addition.

E-books and E-audio books continue to rise in popularity. Assistant Director Amici shared some of the challenges related to the rising costs of e-materials. Not only are some of the books high in cost, they are only essentially rentals as they expire after 2 years or 24 checkouts. They need to be re-purchased at the same price. Director Wood added that there has been a growing effort from some states to fight back against this pricing model.

Last year, the library branches saw about 880,000 visitors though their doors. Several branches saw an increase in their door counts over the years including HQ, EB, Holmdel, Marlboro, Wall, and West Long Branch. Chairperson Boms noted that door counts have decreased in some locations, and was there something that can be done to increase these numbers. Director Wood stated that since these decreases are not significant year-to-year, sometimes it can be a matter of there being a particularly popular program one year that bumps the number up. As a result, Director Wood has increased programming budgets for branches, in an effort to bring in more visitors. Assistant Director Amici added that the rise in popularity of e-books could also be a contributing factor.

Circulation of both physical and e-books also saw an increase in 2025. Director Wood added that the increase in physical materials is a great sign, because many libraries are seeing their e-books skyrocket while physical items are starting to decline.

Wi-fi usage is also on the rise. Headquarters saw approximately 25,000 users, Eastern Branch 18,000 users, and Holmdel 10,000 wi-fi users in 2025.

On our e-book platform Libby, e-audio books saw a 20% increase in 2025. E-audio books are important because in many cases, there is no alternative format (such as CD) in which to acquire these titles . In addition, Libby also provides a huge digital magazine collection, many of which are no longer printed. This collection had a 32% increase.

A “grab and go” model for patron holds was instituted across the library branches in 2025. Holds are placed on a shelf where patrons can grab their own materials and check out either using self-service kiosks or at the circulation desk. This has been successful across all locations.

The Art Department does an incredible job creating promotional material for our library programs. The volume the department creates monthly is very impressive. Val Pasko and Christine Devine-Burgi have shifted much of their content to digital. Some items, however, such as children’s program fliers, are still printed as demand warrants.

Near the end of 2025, the library’s primary book vendor, Baker & Taylor, ceased operations without notice. The ordering staff in Extension stepped up to take on the large task of cancelling and repurchasing orders with a new vendor, Ingram. They did a fantastic job and adapted, in the face of a very challenging situation. Our acquisition staff also had an incredible task before them and had to take on manually processing all physical materials ordered. This includes unboxing

all ordered items across all branch and member libraries, printing spine labels, and cataloging. This also increased deliveries since items were previously fully processed and drop shipped. The seamless resolution of this operational crisis is a direct result of the dedication, resilience, and coordination demonstrated by the Extension and acquisitions teams. Their hard work ensured that library operations and patron access remained uncompromised during a critical period.

A ticketing system which helps staff to quickly identify and address computer-related issues was started in Zoho in October of 2025. Zoho continues to be a great tool.

Looking forward, there are several tech-related projects on the horizon. This year, the self-check out kiosks will be replaced. Additionally, new print management support has been implemented. A replacement of all staff and public computers is planned for 2027. We hope this project will be supported from our fund balance.

The budget from 2025 was predominately utilized for salaries, benefits and indirect costs. Assistant Director Amici pointed out that the budget for programming has been significantly increased, as there is large demand and programming is a great way to attract the public into to the library.

To conclude, the top most popular books across adult, young adult, and children's were shown. In addition, statistics on museum pass usage were discussed. The most popular by far has been the Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia, as well as the more recently added Frick Collection in New York. In the coming year, museum memberships will be evaluated for usage.

Assistant Director Amici wished to extend her gratitude to the library staff, Director Robin Wood, County Administration, and the Library Commission for being so dedicated and wonderful to work with.

Commission Approval – Local Author Policy – Effective July 1, 2026

Director Wood distributed copies of the proposed Local Author Policy and form for commission review and approval.

A Motion to approve the Local Author Policy – Effective July 1, 2026 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

Director's Report

Human Resources Report – In the period between 5/19/26 through 6/15/26 there was 1 retirement, 1 resignation, and 7 promotions. These included 3 promotions to Librarian 1, and 3 staff who went from Library Assistant to Senior Library Assistant, and 1 who went from a Senior Library Assistant to a Supervising Library Assistant. In addition, there are currently 18 postings for open positions that Debbie Potter is working hard to fill.

2024/2025 Annual Report - Copies of the final draft for the 2024/2025 combined Annual Report were distributed. Director Wood asked that any suggested changes be given to her by the following week before the report is finalized. She wished to thank the Art and Programming departments as well as Assistant Director Amici for the hard work in putting this together.

First Fridays – After the success of a session on dealing with difficult patron interactions at the recent Staff Day, it was decided to implement a monthly staff training session on the subject. "First Fridays" is a voluntary monthly meeting where recent patron incidents and strategies on navigating these occurrences are discussed. The first one was held on Friday 6/5 and was an overall success.

Looking Ahead – Director Wood shared that she has been working on updating and revising the library's Volunteer Policy and should have it finalized for approval in the Fall. Additionally, she hopes get started on Strategic Planning in the coming months.

Correspondence – Director Wood shared that she recently received a call from a patron who commended the entire staff of the Howell Branch. The patron noted that, "everyone is always very kind, helpful, and treat everyone as if they are friends and family." She added that she "loves visiting the branch and wanted to be sure that staff are recognized for all the great work they do." Director Wood sent an email to Branch Manager Debbie Bagchi congratulating her and the staff for their outstanding work.

Maribeth Pelly of the Brielle Library sent a note to Director Wood thanking Assistant Director Heidi Amici for all that she does, and shared her appreciation for Monmouth County Library's continued support.

Assistant Director's Report

Assistant Director Heidi Amici shared the collection of books that are dedicated in honor of Commission Frank Wells. All books are inscribed with a book plate that reads, "In honor of Frank Wells for his service to country, and dedication to libraries and civic engagement 2026" These books will be held at the Union Beach Library.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Marcy McMullen wished to thank Director Wood, Asst. Director Amici, and library staff for all of their hard work and dedication.

Chairperson Boms inquired about some of the numbers on the draft of the 2024/2025 Annual Report. Director Wood said she will look into this prior to finalizing the report.

Public Comments

Let it be known for the record that no comments were made.

Next Meeting

The regular next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

The public meeting concluded at 11:22 am.

Submitted by Katie Kenny